



# Illinois Veteran News

An Update from the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs ★ May 2017

## ★ From the Director



Memorial Day may be the unofficial start of the summer season, but all Americans should take a moment to remember the sacrifice of our valiant military service members and their families. Memorial Day is a day of both celebration and remembrance, recognizing the honor of our heroes and reflecting on their courage and willingness to give all for our great nation. My family and I will be taking time out to remember and honor those brave men and women and I hope you and your family will do the same.

Coming this June, we will launch an exciting new program called LifeNav. LifeNav is a free program for all veterans transitioning from the military to civilian life. Studies have proven that this transition can be a very stressful time for some veterans. Our program is led by veterans for veterans. In just two hours a month, a participant can gain impactful insight discussing topics relating to veteran transition. The first meeting is set for June 15, 2017 at the The Bunker, 222 West Merchandise Mart Plaza, Suite 1212 in Chicago from 3 – 5 pm. Save the date and get the answers to make your transition a successful one!

Finally, over the past 8 months, IDVA has had the privilege of honoring our Vietnam Veterans through the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration. This dignified tribute to our Vietnam Veterans is overdue, but is offered with true gratitude, grace and many times emotion. Every Vietnam Veteran who attends receives a Department of Defense Vietnam War Veteran commemoration pin. The feedback we have received is overwhelming as we “Welcome Home our Heroes”. We will host many more throughout Illinois. Watch our Event Calendar on our website for the next ceremony.

**Erica Jeffries**

*Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs*

Our mission at the IDVA is very simple. To serve those who have served. In doing so, we serve not only the men and women who have worn the uniform, but also their families. It is our privilege to be able to help our veterans receive the benefits they have earned through service to our nation. Our goal is to empower our veterans and their families to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

We know there are many veterans within our great state who do not require any assistance – but we still want to encourage you to “Stand Up and Be Counted!” by registering with your local VSO. In doing so, you're helping IDVA to do a better job of planning for services, seeking federal funding and understanding the needs of our veteran communities statewide. [Click here to register.](#)

**We Thank you for your service and for your sacrifice and we at the IDVA look forward to offering our services to You.**

## ★ Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army



Director Jeffries was invested as the newest civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) during a ceremony conducted on April 19, 2017 at the Pentagon. Director

Jeffries was selected by acting Secretary of the Army, **Robert M. Speer** to represent Illinois (North). CASA are a vital part of the Army, promoting good relations between the Army and the public and advising the Secretary on regional issues. "Erica already plays a significant role in serving our veterans in the state of Illinois," said Speer. "I am pleased that she is willing to provide her knowledge to our current Soldiers as well and play a central role as we look to her to help represent the Army."

Each state, the District of Columbia and the five U.S. territories have one or more CASA appointed to provide a vital link between the Army and the communities for which they serve. CASA are usually business or civic leaders who possess a keen interest in the welfare of the Army and their communities. For protocol, CASA rank is equivalent to that of a Lieutenant General.

## ★ IDVA Employees

**Mark Sherbeyn**, the new Human Resources Manager joined us on 17 April 2017. He comes to us from Military Affairs working as the Human Resources Manager at Lincoln's Challenge Academy for the past year. He served as a one person Human Resources Department at LCA where he utilized his training as a Black Belt to promote process improvement across the entire Academy.

Mark retired from service after 27 years in the Illinois Army National Guard. His military career contains experiences as an Infantryman, Recruiter, CH47 Flight Engineer, Human Resources Specialist, and UH 60 Flight Company First Sergeant. He deployed to Iraq with F Company 106th Aviation February 2003 through June 2004 and then to Afghanistan with B Company, 2nd Battalion, 238th GSAB from November 2008 through December 2009. After his last deployment, he was moved to Camp Lincoln where he worked in the Military Personnel Office tracking and managing personnel transactions of over 10,000 Soldiers within the Illinois Guard. He is a member of SHRM, Society for Human Resource Management and CiHRG, Central Illinois Human Resources Group.

Mark currently lives in Monticello with his better half, Erika, who is still serving full time in the Army National Guard. They have 4 children, Alex age 26, Nathaniel age 21, Emma age 19 and Katie age 16.



We are happy to announce that **Matt Eddington** has been promoted to Deputy General Counsel for the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA). Prior to joining IDVA, Matt earned his law degree at the John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Illinois and a Bachelor's Degree with a major in Philosophy at DePaul University

in Chicago, Illinois. During law school, Matt worked with legal volunteer groups to provide free legal services to the Chicago community and also worked as an extern with IDVA.

Outside of work, Matt lives in Chicago and serves as a board member of a local non-profit organization which provides education to homeless children who live in shelters. Matt is a craft beer connoisseur, an aspiring chef, and an amateur historian. He harbors a particularly strong passion for the Cubs (because he's from Illinois).





## Quincy

The Master Gardner's Club, in conjunction with the Illinois Veterans Home, recognized four area Boy Scouts who have completed, or have nearly completed, their Eagle Scout projects in the Memorial Garden or in the Schapers Courtyard, both located on the grounds of the Illinois Veterans Home on Sunday, May 7th.

- **Noah Stull**, 17, son of Rob and Mickie Stull. Noah is a member Boy Scout Troop #76 sponsored by St. Anthony Church. Noah erected a flag pole and stone planters in the Memorial Garden.
- **Jacob Morrison**, 18, son of Rick and Jeanne Morrison. Jacob is a member Boy Scout Troop #76 sponsored by St. Anthony Church. Jacob placed medal garden markers in several areas of the Memorial Garden. Each of those areas is named after a major United States war.
- **Jack Secrest**, 17, son of Ron Secrest and Misty Johnson. Jack is a member Boy Scout Troop #1 sponsored by Blessed Sacrament Church. Jack built a white picket fence in front of the Memorial Garden.
- **Jonathon Kuhn**, 15, son of Gary Kuhn and Patricia Kuhn. Jonathon is a member Boy Scout Troop #99 sponsored by Melrose Chapel. Jonathon built a gazebo in the Schapers Courtyard.



*Jeff Godin, son; Pat Godin, wife; Lisa McCue, daughter*

## Manteno

On Sunday, April 30 the Chapel at the Veterans Home in Manteno was named and dedicated for a former administrator, Mr. Lee Godin. Mr. Godin's family provided a memorial donation to home. Mr. Godin, a former military chaplain was instrumental in the building of the Chapel. A plaque with photographs of Mr. Godin as a military Chaplain and his professional portrait from when he was the Manteno home administrator are hung beside of the memorial plaque. Mr. Godin and his families generosity will be remember for many generations to come.

## Canon Place Grand Opening



Assistant Director Harry Sawyer spoke at the Ribbon cutting for Cannon Place. This facility is a development for homeless veterans and their families. The community is comprised of 65 units of affordable and supportive including accessible and adaptable one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.

The development is designed to maximize the number of housing opportunities in the area for those who have served our country.

The 20-acre property is located in a beautiful setting on the campus of the VA Illiana Health Care System in Danville, Illinois, and is within walking distance of the Danville Area Community College. Residents began moving in September 2016.



## ★ IDVA Calendar

**5/6-12** National Nurses Week  
**5/18** Muster Bunker – *Chicago*  
**5/19** Viet Now Convention – *Crystal Lake*  
**5/19** Operation Vets  
**5/20** Armed Forces Day  
**5/20** Armed Forces Parade – *Decatur*  
**5/20** Volunteer of America IL  
4th Annual Hope Walk – *Chicago*  
**5/24** Wall of Remembrance 2017  
– *Springfield – Capitol Rotunda*  
**5/26** Vietnam Veteran Commemoration – *Aurora, IL*  
**5/26** IVH Quincy Memorial Day Program – *Quincy IL*  
**5/27** Veterans Picnic – *Aurora, IL*  
**5/27** Wreath Laying – *Daley Plaza-Chicago*  
**5/27** Memorial Day Parade - *Chicago*  
**5/29** Memorial Day - *State Offices Closed*  
**5/31-6/4** Marine Corps Convention - *Springfield*  
**6/9-11** AMVETS Conference – *Springfield*  
**6/13** Citi Bank – *Chicago*  
**6/14** Flag Day and Army Birthday  
**6/23** DAV Convention – *Springfield*  
**7/11-15** American Legion Convention - *Springfield*

Find details about all these events and others on our Events page of our website -

<https://www.illinois.gov/veterans/about-us/events/Pages/default.aspx>

## ★ Follow us



IDVA website

[www.illinois.gov/veterans](http://www.illinois.gov/veterans)

Facebook

[www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs](http://www.facebook.com/IllinoisDepartmentOfVeteransAffairs)

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisWomenVeterans/#>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/ILVetsAffairs>

LinkedIn

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/il-dva>



**Wishing all of our Nurses a Happy Nurses Appreciation Week!**

We truly do appreciate you and the hard work you do every day. Thanks to you, our residents are happily receiving the highest quality nursing care in Illinois!

**Thank you!**



State of Illinois  
Department of Veterans' Affairs



Illinois Department of  
**Veterans' Affairs**